

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE NEW POWER-SHARING GOVERN- MENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 482) expressing support for the new power-sharing government in Northern Ireland, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 482

Whereas the Good Friday Agreement, signed on April 10, 1998, in Belfast, and endorsed in a referendum by the overwhelming majority of people in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, set forth a blueprint for lasting peace in Northern Ireland;

Whereas on May 8, 2007, leaders from the major political parties in Northern Ireland took office as part of an agreement to share power in accordance with the democratic mandate of the Good Friday Agreement;

Whereas on May 8, 2007, Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness became Northern Ireland's first minister and deputy first minister, marking the beginning of a new era of power-sharing;

Whereas Dr. Paisley, the Democratic Unionist leader, and Mr. McGuinness, the Sinn Féin negotiator, have put aside decades of conflict and moved toward historic reconciliation and unity in Northern Ireland;

Whereas on May 8, 2007, Dr. Paisley declared, "I believe that Northern Ireland has come to a time of peace, a time when hate will no longer rule.";

Whereas Mr. McGuinness declared this new government to be "a fundamental change of approach, with parties moving forward together to build a better future for the people that we represent";

Whereas former British Prime Minister Tony Blair declared that "[T]oday marks not just the completion of the transition from conflict to peace, but also gives the most visible expression to the fundamental principle on which the peace process has been based. The acceptance that the future of Northern Ireland can only be governed successfully by both communities working together, equal before the law, equal in the mutual respect shown by all and equally committed both to sharing power and to securing peace. That is the only basis upon which true democracy can function and by which normal politics can at last after decades of violence and suffering come to this beautiful but troubled land.";

Whereas the Taoiseach of Ireland, Bertie Ahern, declared that "[O]n this day, we mark the historic beginning of a new era for Northern Ireland. An era founded on peace and partnership. An era of new politics and new realities.";

Whereas both communities have worked together in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect to solve the problems of concern to all the people of Northern Ireland, including the decision by all the major political parties to join the Northern Ireland Police Board and support the Police Service of Northern Ireland; and

Whereas President George W. Bush, like his predecessor President William J. Clinton, has worked tirelessly to bring the parties in Northern Ireland together in support of fulfilling the promises of the Good Friday Agreement: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the United States stands strongly in support of the new power-sharing government in Northern Ireland;

(2) political leaders of Northern Ireland, former Prime Minister Tony Blair, and Taoiseach Bertie Ahern should be commended for acting in the best interest of the people of Northern Ireland by forming the new power-sharing government;

(3) May 8, 2007, will be remembered as an historic day and an important milestone in cementing peace and unity for Northern Ireland and a shining example for nations around the world plagued by internal conflict and violence; and

(4) the United States stands ready to support this new government and to work with the people of Northern Ireland as they strive for lasting peace for the people of Northern Ireland.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like, first of all, to commend our distinguished colleague, Mr. GALLEGLY of California, for introducing an important resolution that commemorates a historic occasion in the quest for lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

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On May 8, Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern pronounced "the historic beginning of a new era for Northern Ireland, an era founded on peace and partnership, an era of new politics and new realities."

That day indeed marked a new era as age-old rivals Ian Paisley of the Democratic Unionist Party and Martin McGuinness of Sinn Féin became Northern Ireland's First Minister and Deputy First Minister, respectively, taking their places in the new power-sharing government at Stormont.

May 8 also marked the end of direct rule from London and the end of guns and bombs as a form of political expression. These developments provide an opportunity for the people of Northern Ireland to govern themselves.

Finally, that day marked the end of decades of conflict and gave hope to the spirit of reconciliation, hope that may inspire those in other communities ravaged by sectarian conflict to keep striving to find peace. We think in particular today of the conflicts of Iraq, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine, Cyprus, and Kashmir. The end to civil wars can bring true peace. Ireland is a true example. And since, of course, the

war in Iraq is raging as a civil war, this is a most potent model of success for peace and reconciliation.

We know it will not be easy for these dividing societies to achieve lasting peace, but it was not an easy road for Northern Ireland's war-weary politicians. The prospect of reconciliation was tantalizingly close in April, 1998, when political leaders signed the Good Friday Agreement and voters endorsed its provisions in a referendum. I am reminded of traveling to Ireland with then chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Ben Gilman, as we went from area to area talking with the disparate groups addressing the question of peace in Ireland. In December, 1999, the new Northern Ireland Executive finally met for the first time after repeated failures to agree upon its membership.

During the next 3 years, the assembly operated in fits and starts as political leaders sought to reach agreement on outstanding issues, such as the decommissioning of weapons and reform of the police service. Trust between the two communities deteriorated to such a point that devolution was suspended in October, 2002, and not restored until this past May. It is due in large part to the tireless efforts of Northern Ireland's political representatives as well as the constant encouragement of Ireland and Britain's long-serving leaders, Bertie Ahern and Tony Blair, that solutions were eventually found to the most vexing problems. And may we be reminded that there were those who were willing to lay down their weapons.

I would also like to pay tribute to the efforts of Presidents Bush and Clinton as well as former Senator George Mitchell, who worked together with British and Irish leaders to fulfill the promises of the Good Friday Agreement. Senator George Mitchell worked without ceasing and worked with passion and heart.

It is, of course, the people of Northern Ireland who are the biggest winners, as we in this House hope the establishment of the new power-sharing government heralds the dawn of a truly new era characterized by peace, prosperity and mutual respect for all races and religions.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to rise in strong support of House Resolution 482, expressing support for the new power-sharing arrangement for the government in Northern Ireland.

Madam Speaker, on May 8, long-standing enemies in the violent conflicts in Northern Ireland came together in a historic agreement to put down violence and instead sit together in Parliament. With the formation of a

new Northern Irish government based upon a power-sharing agreement between the unionists and the nationalists, an important component of the 1998 peace accord known as the Good Friday Agreement has been fulfilled, and a further step forward toward a peaceful political settlement in the region has been taken.

Progress toward peace in Northern Ireland has been dangerously unsteady, and it gives us all hope that perhaps at long last the paramilitary organizations in Northern Ireland have lost favor with the public and that people are now looking forward to a legitimate political party process that leads them into the future.

While tensions may not have been completely erased and the differences of opinion will no doubt persist, it is remarkable to contemplate that now, hopefully, such differences will play out in the political arena rather than in the arena of bombs and guns.

Madam Speaker, this legislation rightfully commends the collaboration of former Prime Minister Tony Blair and Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, whose patience and perseverance through the years even in the face of great odds has resulted in this step forward in the peace process. Prime Minister Blair eloquently outlined his fondest hopes for Northern Ireland in a 2002 statement regarding the peace process where he stated: "... enemies would become not just partners in progress but sit together in government" and "... paramilitaries who used to murder each other as a matter of routine would talk to each other and learn to live with each other."

The commitments of Mr. Blair, Mr. Ahern and others appears to have transformed those noble goals into doable outcomes.

Madam Speaker, we all hope for a Northern Ireland that is a safer place to live and that those benefits turn into a prosperous economy for all. These recent developments are positive steps forward, but there is still much work to be done. We should seek to encourage continuing momentum and goodwill and support the new power-sharing agreement in whatever way is appropriate and possible to do.

I, therefore, ask my colleagues to join me in voting for this measure to show our support for this new government and to express our hope that the people of Northern Ireland will at long last achieve their goal of peace.

Madam Speaker, I now yield such time as he may consume to Mr. GALLEGLY, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Europe.

Mr. GALLEGLY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, House Resolution 482, which I introduced on June 12, expresses the support of the House of Representatives for one of the most successful efforts in peacemaking in modern European history.

The resolution recognizes the success of the Northern Irish peace process

that had its first major breakthrough with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. While the Good Friday Agreement provided the blueprint for lasting peace, it took years of negotiation and compromise by both communities in Northern Ireland for the agreement to be fully implemented.

This occurred on May 8 with the formation of a government based on a power-sharing arrangement involving the largest unionist and nationalist parties in Northern Ireland. The May 8 accord translated the general principles of the Good Friday Agreement into a concrete political settlement with important powers being transferred from London to Belfast.

Madam Speaker, House Resolution 482 expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States should strongly support the new power-sharing government in Northern Ireland. The legislation also commends the Northern Irish political leaders, both of those who represent the Catholic and Protestant communities, as well as former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Irish leader Bertie Ahern for their leadership in the formation of this new government.

Lastly, House Resolution 482 states that the U.S. stands ready to support the new government and to work with the people of Northern Ireland to achieve their goal of a long-lasting peace.

Madam Speaker, the restoration of power-sharing institutions, the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive Committee, will not ensure lasting peace in Northern Ireland. Much work remains to be done in terms of bringing the two communities even closer together. And Congress must stay engaged with Northern Ireland as an honest broker in the years to come.

However, the May 8 agreement represents major progress in resolving a sectarian conflict that has plagued Northern Ireland for over 400 years and has claimed over 3,200 lives just since 1969.

Madam Speaker, this legislation is cosponsored, I believe, by every one of my colleagues that have taken a legislative or leadership role in the Congress in resolving sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland.

I urge the passage of House Resolution 482.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, at this time I would like to yield such time as he may consume to Mr. TIM MURPHY, a member of the Friends of Ireland Caucus and a leader on this peace process.

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me on this important part that other colleagues and I have traveled to Ireland to work on this issue. And I am pleased today to speak in support of the power-sharing agreement reached in Northern Ireland.

Since my own youth, I have followed the conflicts in Northern Ireland and, like many Americans, hoped and prayed for the day when there would be peace throughout all the island of Ireland. As of a few weeks ago, with the power-sharing agreement, it would seem that peace has finally come. Now DUP, Sinn Fein, the UUP and the SDLP all share in the governance of Northern Ireland. Now men and women who once gave fiery speeches in opposition to one another sit at the same table working with one another.

When I visited Northern Ireland a few months ago with other Members of Congress, we were witnessing history, perhaps the end to centuries of conflict, the beginning of a new dawn. It was not too long ago, beginning in the 1960s, that marches for civil rights in Northern Ireland were followed by decades of riots, assassinations, bombings and warfare carried out by paramilitary groups. Thousands of British troops occupied the north to stop the violence. Ceasefires temporarily stopped the attacks, but the "Troubles," as they came to be known, continued. In the end, over 3,200 or more were killed and thousands more were wounded.

Phil Coulter from Northern Ireland wrote in the song a few years ago, "The Town I Loved So Well," about his return to the area, where he wrote in the final verse:

"Now the music's gone, but they carry on for their spirit's been bruised, never broken. They will not forget, but their hearts are set on tomorrow and peace once again. For what's done is done, and what's won is won, and what's lost is lost and gone forever. I can only pray for a bright, brand new day in the town I loved so well."

Perhaps those prayers have been answered. The troops are gone. The bombings have stopped. And there is hope for all of the towns that are loved by the citizens of Northern Ireland.

Eight years ago, the Northern Ireland political parties signed the Good Friday Agreement, which established a blueprint for self-rule. But reconciliation faced continued difficulties. New deadlines to start self-government were set. The ceasefires continued to hold, and another election occurred in March of this year. Then, for the first time, men who were enemies, the likes of Ian Paisley, Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams, sat at the same tables to establish self-government. It was nothing short of remarkable that left all on the island with a palpable sense of awe and hope.

How did they do it?

First, there was hope for prosperity. The south of Ireland is in the midst of the greatest economic boom in the European Union. Families in Northern Ireland want to be part of that prosperity rather than the poverty and dependence on government jobs and the dole. They are putting tremendous pressure on their leaders to settle the differences and create jobs.

Number two, international diplomacy. The prime ministers of the United Kingdom, such as Tony Blair, and Ireland's Bertie Ahern, Presidents Clinton and Bush, and Members of Congress from the United States, in particular Mr. WALSH and KING of New York and Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, have all maintained pressure for resolution. At the same time, programs supported by the International Fund for Ireland brought Catholics and Protestants together to build positive relations.

Third, the disarmament of paramilitary groups. The IRA says it has given up its weapons, and outside observers agree. And even though other paramilitary groups say they are not yet ready to disarm, there is still a discernible belief that the days of terrorism are a thing of the past.

□ 1845

Each day without violence builds trust.

Number four: integration of the police force. To overcome the fears that the police will be used as weapons by or against either side, they have been working towards a goal of 50 percent Catholic and 50 percent Protestant. Respect for law enforcement is growing on both sides; and after 30 years of occupation, the last British troops quietly left only a few weeks ago.

In the midst of this hope, there are many challenges that lie ahead. Ninety-five percent of schools are still segregated. Thirty-foot high "peace" walls still divide Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods. Huge murals still cover the sides of buildings declaring loyalty to the Crown or to Ireland, or showing one or other masked paramilitary members looking down the barrel of a gun declaring who controls the neighborhood, or depicting an atrocity blamed on either the Catholics or the Protestants. Some neighborhoods fly the Union Jack of the United Kingdom, and others the green, white and orange flag of Ireland.

Perhaps these challenges and choices facing the people of Northern Ireland are best characterized by one of the murals we saw in a Belfast neighborhood. It depicts a large black and white photograph of a youth lying wounded on a street while a riot looms behind in the neighborhood. Another youth stands in the foreground throwing a bomb. But encircling this picture are the words, "Can It Change?" And at the bottom is the word "Believe."

While the original meaning of the mural was meant to show that this Protestant neighborhood believed it could rise up and defend itself against what it considered to be ethnic cleansing, perhaps this mural can take on a new meaning today. Perhaps it can be a beacon of hope to believe in an end to violence and a lasting peace. Indeed, keeping the peace will demand that many believe. And if they do, perhaps this time, in our time, there will be an end to several centuries of warfare.

Perhaps this time the elected government shared by the parties will not just be one more temporary fix, but the dawn of a bright brand new day in the towns that we all love so well.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to Mr. WALSH of New York, a cosponsor of this resolution, and a long-time champion of the peace process in Northern Ireland.

Mr. WALSH of New York. I thank my good friend and colleague from Florida for giving me time to speak on this issue, and to my colleague from California, who brought this resolution to the floor, and my colleague from Texas.

This is a wonderful celebration of a great success for mankind, not just for the Irish, but for all of mankind. And it's an important and significant foreign policy success for the United States of America.

About 12 years ago, then-Speaker Gingrich asked me if I would be willing to chair the Friends of Ireland, an ad hoc organization within the Congress that had been begun by Tip O'Neill, and the tradition continued through Speaker Wright and Foley and then Gingrich. Historically it had been a Democratic Congress, and I was the first Republican to chair it. But we never missed a beat. The Democrats and the Republicans worked side by side. Both Houses, Senators KENNEDY and DODD, MCCONNELL and CONNIE MACK worked hand in hand with RICH NEAL, PETE KING, myself, Ben Gilman, and so many others.

There is a real paradigm here for American foreign policy. If we can get everybody working together, we can solve I think pretty much anything in the world. But we played a part in this. The significant players were the British, beginning with John Major, and certainly Tony Blair, who focused on this all through his entire career. And also on the other island of Ireland, going all the way back to Elbert Reynolds and John Bruton, and then Bertie Ahern for the last 10 years. Every one of them, and again, different parties, different leaders, different philosophies, the same with the United States at the White House with President Clinton and then President Bush. Regardless of party, regardless of nationality, people all focused on what needed to be done.

I remember when I first took on this assignment, and what a labor of love for me, as an Irish-American, son of an Irish mother and an Irish father, when I first met David Tremble and I asked him, what do you expect to get from all of this? He said one word, Peace. And then subsequently, a day or so later, I had the chance to meet Gerry Adams and I asked Gerry Adams, what do you expect from all this? He said in three words, Peace with justice. And so I think both men showed remarkable patience and persistence through this process. And certainly now we have a government that combines the repub-

lican forces of Northern Ireland, Adams, McGuinness and others, and the loyalist forces led by Ian Paisley, Peter Robinson, Jeffrey Donaldson and others. It's a remarkable achievement. It's almost like having Sunnis and Shia working together in Iraq. Imagine that. It's possible.

But we should celebrate this victory as Americans, and as members of the family of man, because it is a great victory. We have taken a very, very dangerous place on the Earth and made it a peaceful place. We have seen the people of Northern Ireland, loyalists, nationalists, Catholic and Protestant, come together in one exercise, a democratic legislation. And it was that election, the election this spring, that really provided the coup de grace to violence and established democracy because all the parties participated and the people provided ultimately the leadership that was required to make this happen and gave their leaders the strength and the political capital to form this government.

So TIM MURPHY and I and a number of others, RICH NEAL, were in Ireland to watch Ian Paisley walk across the sidewalk in Dublin and shake hands with Bertie Ahern, say, I've got to grip this man's hand, give him a good grip. It was astounding. And the pictures of Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness and Peter Robinson and Ian Paisley meeting together was an astounding picture that sent hope out to the entire world. So credit everyone. Victory has a thousand fathers and mothers. And we should all celebrate that.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Let me thank the sponsors of this legislation. This was an important discussion on the floor.

And I might just conclude in my thanks to the ranking member and the chairman of the full committee, and remind my colleagues that the message of this legislation is the point of individuals in conflict willing to lay their guns and weapons down in what has been a long-standing civil war, and their ability to share power; important lessons for countries or nations like Iraq, Lebanon, and many, many others.

With that, I ask my colleagues to support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 482, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further

proceedings on this question will be postponed.

OPPOSING EFFORTS BY NATURAL GAS EXPORTING COUNTRIES TO ESTABLISH A CARTEL

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 500) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in opposition to efforts by major natural gas exporting countries to establish a cartel or other mechanism to manipulate the supply of natural gas to the world market for the purpose of setting an arbitrary and nonmarket price or as an instrument of political pressure, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 500

Whereas the United States currently is largely self-sufficient in natural gas but is projected to greatly increase its usage over time, which could create a growing dependence on world supply;

Whereas the cost of natural gas has approximately tripled since 2000 and has had a significant negative impact on United States manufacturers and on employment in manufacturing;

Whereas in 2004 alone the rising cost of natural gas was responsible for the closure of scores of chemical companies in the United States and the loss of over 100,000 jobs;

Whereas chemicals, plastics, and advanced composite materials are used extensively for military and commercial applications and are crucial components of the United States defense industrial base, which is the foundation of United States national security;

Whereas Europe, as well as Japan, South Korea, and other United States allies, are heavily dependent on imported natural gas, and countries such as China and India are rapidly increasing their reliance on foreign suppliers;

Whereas the supply of natural gas is controlled by a relatively small number of countries, including Iran, Russia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Algeria, and Qatar, among others;

Whereas these and other countries have established an organization known as the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) to promote coordination on policies regarding natural gas;

Whereas the members of the GECF are estimated to possess over 70 percent of global gas reserves and over 40 percent of global production;

Whereas several of these countries have governments hostile to the United States;

Whereas on January 29, 2007, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei proposed that Russia and Iran cooperate to establish a cartel for natural gas, which has been termed a "gas OPEC";

Whereas Russian President Putin has expressed great interest in the formation of a cartel of this type;

Whereas Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has declared his strong support for the proposed cartel and described it as an expansion of his efforts to establish a similar cartel in the Western Hemisphere;

Whereas Iranian officials have made clear their interest in using this "gas OPEC" as an instrument for political purposes;

Whereas Russia has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to use its role as supplier of oil and gas to exert political pres-

sure on other countries, such as Georgia, Ukraine, and Belarus, among others;

Whereas Europe currently relies on Russia for almost half of its imports of natural gas and is likely to increase its dependence on this source over the next decade;

Whereas North Atlantic Treaty Organization officials have warned of the danger of Europe's increasing dependence on Russian energy and of the prospect of alternative suppliers, such as Algeria, cooperating with Russia;

Whereas at the GECF meeting in Doha on April 9, 2007, of senior officials from Iran, Russia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Algeria, Qatar, and other countries, an agreement was reached to establish a committee chaired by the Russian Government to study proposals for greater coordination of policies, including pricing, that participants stated would be necessary for the creation of a cartel; and Whereas the creation of an international cartel for natural gas similar to that of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) would pose a major threat to the price and supply of energy, to the economy of the United States and of the world, and to their security: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the United States should make clear to the governments of major natural gas exporting countries that it regards efforts to establish a cartel or other mechanism to manipulate the supply of natural gas to the world market for the purpose of setting an arbitrary and nonmarket price, or as an instrument of political pressure, to be prejudicial to the security of the United States and of the world as a whole;

(2) the United States should develop a joint strategy with its allies and all countries that are importers of natural gas, as well as with cooperative exporting countries, to prevent the establishment of a cartel or other mechanism of this type, including by diversifying sources and alternative means of access by exporters and importers to international markets, such as by pipeline; and

(3) in order to mitigate potential economic and other threats to our security, the United States should work with our allies to reduce our dependence on natural gas and to increase and promote the utilization of clean energy sources.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution and yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I would like to thank our distinguished colleague, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN of Florida, for introducing this important resolution.

Madam Speaker, one of the most confusing inventions over the past century was the Organization of Petroleum Ex-

porting Countries. Some call it a cartel, some call it a monopoly, and some just call it what it is, that is, price-gouging by a few countries that have managed to challenge the international security in the process.

Recently, several leaders of the major exporters of natural gas, including Iran, have publicly advocated the establishment of an international cartel similar to that of OPEC, thus proposing to create a "gas OPEC."

The Iranian supreme leader has been very clear in his interest to use his cartel as an instrument for political purposes.

Although the United States currently is largely self-sufficient in natural gas, our usage is projected to increase over time, which could result in a growing dependence on world supply. Our European and Asian allies are heavily dependent on imported natural gas. Therefore, we believe a debate should begin on how we can use the world's resources fairly to avoid penalizing those dependent on such resources, and to avoid the crisis that has generated the utilization of energy from Sudan by many of our allies like those in Europe and Asia while genocide is occurring in that country.

The creation of this cartel would pose a major and long-term disruption to the world's energy supply and convene a potential crisis that would significantly undermine America's interests. We cannot stand by and let yet another global oligopoly in the form of a gas OPEC to be established which would ultimately raise the cost of energy globally in an unfair manner; nor can we allow the major natural gas exporters, some of whom are current or potential adversaries of the United States, to develop a powerful political weapon to be used against us and our allies. I can only imagine what policy ends such a body would aim to achieve with its natural gas leverage.

Not only the United States would be impacted, but many of the developing nations and many of our friends and foes around the world. The world's natural resources belong to the world's people, and the fact that such a potential organization could deny that would be a catastrophe, particularly for those emerging developing nations.

This resolution puts on notice those countries seeking to establish a cartel in natural gas that the United States regards such efforts as a threat to the security of the entire world. This proposed cartel would, I believe, be part of a dangerous throwback through authoritarianism. It would create instability in the respective regions and, in Iran's case, to the world. No one wishes to see them commence an axis that would embolden their respective nations and their respective regimes.

I strongly support this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.